

# The South Central/Southwest Steuben Champion Community Association

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On September 27, 2000, USDA Rural Development entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with several municipalities in southwestern Steuben County designating the area as a "Champion Community." The **South Central/Southwest Steuben Champion Community Association** (SCSSCC) was formed with representatives from Towns of Addison, Cameron, Greenwood, Jasper, Rathbone, Troupsburg, Tuscarora, Woodhull, and the Village of Addison.

The Champion Community program is a citizen-led initiative to create a vision for a community and then implement that vision. The designation builds on the comprehensive planning, collaborative effort, and grass roots initiative that went into the area's application to the Federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) program.

Projects within the Champion Community receive special consideration when applying for USDA Rural Development funding. The designation also allows the area to access funds specially reserved for Champion Communities. In addition, regardless of the funding source, USDA Rural Development provides extensive technical assistance to help communities pursue their goals.

The South Central/Southwest Steuben Champion Community Association has created a governing board, developed bylaws and is currently reviewing the vision for the area that was developed last summer through a series of community meetings. The next step will be to turn their energy into actions that will make this vision a reality.

Currently, each municipality is entitled to nominate a representative to the governing board. The governing board guides the direction of the Champion Community, builds partnerships to implement specific projects in the strategic plan, and determines which projects should receive special consideration by USDA Rural Development. The MOU, bylaws and strategic plan are available for review at Town and Village offices and libraries. The monthly meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the last Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The location rotates to different town halls throughout the Champion Community. For location, please contact any town hall.

For more information please contact Marge Evanek, Rural Development Specialist at (607) 257-2737 x127